

Montana GEAR UP

Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education / Montana University System



Directors Message

Although the days are noticeably shorter, this is one of my favorite times of the year. The school year is well underway and generally there is a busy rhythm about things. At Montana GEAR UP, it is no different. I am still keeping busy just learning about the many components of GEAR UP. Last week I was able to participate in a campus visit to UM – Helena College of Technology with Browning High School students. Having given campus tours in a previous life, it was an eye opener for me to see it from the perspective of GEAR UP students. Life is a continual learning experience, which is what makes it so interesting and energizing!

Recently I had the privilege of sitting in on the MGSLP presentations given by Tina Wagner and Lance Foster. They do a great job! If you haven't scheduled a time for them to present to your students, I encourage you to do so. Tina has a real gift of telling her story so middle school students can relate and see the importance of education. I'm amazed at how quickly Lance has come up to speed in his new position as he provides information on careers and paying for college.

The annual surveys to evaluate Montana GEAR UP will be going out shortly. We hope the revisions will make the surveys easier to read and complete. There is a short turn-around time for the surveys this year. They are due back **December 23, 2003** to the Montana Small Schools Alliance. We realize this is a busy time of year for everyone but in order to have the information ready for the Annual Performance Report that is submitted to the U.S. Department of Education, we need to get them back as soon as possible.

Mid-Term Progress Reports were instituted this year as a part of the revised implementation plan. The intention is not only to give Helena staff an idea of how things are going in the field, but also for you to do a self-assessment of your GEAR UP project. If you think you could use some help with weak areas of your GEAR UP project, don't hesitate to contact your grant manager to see if he can help you with some technical assistance or connect you with the appropriate person for assistance.

As always, let us hear about your struggles and successes. Those of you working directly with the students need to share your experiences with us. That will serve to strengthen the entire Montana GEAR UP program!

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Goodbye Libby, Welcome Lance!

Libby Siebens has taken a new position, in the Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program, and will no longer be coming around to the high schools to do financial aid presentations. Goodbye Libby, and thanks for all of your great work that you did with the Montana GEAR UP students

Lance Foster is the new outreach coordinator at the Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program. Lance will be on the road this fall making high school financial aid and college prep presentations. Lance replaces Libby Siebens who is now working with college financial aid offices and on agency marketing. Originally from New Orleans, Lance spent 7 years in the Army as a transportation coordinator, before coming to Helena in 2001. He is currently working on a degree in Management Information Systems at Kaplan College and is looking forward to visiting GEAR UP high schools.

Lance is already getting rave reviews from the schools he has visited, and as you all know Tina is tops! If you haven't scheduled financial aid presentations in your schools yet, be sure to contact Lance or Tina soon!



Lance trying hard not to smile

November Reminders:



Save the dates! Upcoming opportunities for professional development:

- Montana Indian Education Association Annual Conference. April 1-4, 2004 Holiday Inn-Parkside, Missoula, MT.
- Families and Learning Conference. April 14-16, 2004 West Coast Colonial Hotel, Helena, MT
- Montana GEAR UP School Counseling Institute. April 22-23 2004 Holiday Inn, Bozeman, MT

College Visits:

Now that the school year is well under way, I thought I would take a moment to discuss college visits. Some of you may have already completed a visit or are in the process of planning a visit for the near future. I would appreciate the following information sent to me via email when the visit is over.

1. The number of students with their grade levels that went on the college visit
2. Date(s) of the visit
3. Where did you go for your college visit?
4. The duration of the visit
5. Number of staff/chaperones that went on the college visit
6. What labs, classes, presentations, etc. did the students attend?

Feel free to contact me with your questions or suggestions on college visits.

Happy Thanksgiving to all of you!

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Browning GEAR UP students visiting the Helena College of Technology

Miscellany:

- The Mid-term progress and fiscal report forms are available on the web.
- Speaking of the web, be on the lookout for a new look. Susan King recently spent three days in professional development learning some new software for building web pages, and is working on a new look for the GEAR UP page.
- Speaking of the web some more, if your school has a website, we would sure like to link it to the GEAR UP site, please email Susan King the link to your school's homepage.
- The Essay Contest is in the planning stages and the questions should be available by the beginning of December, so plan ahead.
- The annual GEAR UP surveys will be coming to your mailbox soon. They are due back **December 23, 2003** to the Montana Small Schools Alliance.
- This newsletter is also available on the web! www.gearup.montana.edu
- Here's another site worth checking out with lots of FREE educational resources: www.ed.gov/free
- We want to hear from you! Let Peter or Everall know if you have a story from your school that you would like to share in a future newsletter in the school spotlight section.
- Have a **great** Thanksgiving!

The GEAR UP Spotlight

No doubt about it, there are great things going on in all of the GEAR UP schools! From here on out, we would like to share some of your local highlights in the GEAR UP newsletter in a section called GEAR UP Spotlight. What better way to share best practices, and brag about your program and students.

Each month, we will include one or two submissions throughout the school year. If there is something going on in your school that you would like to share with the group, let your Grant Manager know before the 10th of the month.

Check out this month's schools in the spotlight below.



GEAR UP Spotlight: WYOLA

This past September Wyola Elementary School received notification they would be the recipients of a Beaumont Foundation Grant in excess of \$60,000. The grant was applied for last spring. Beaumont will purchase for Wyola 30 new wireless laptop Toshiba computers, a mobile housing unit, a new workstation 2003 Server, one LCD projector and 5 digital cameras. Wyola will use this lab to incorporate technology into all classrooms. Wyola is currently using PLATO in all classrooms, along with being part of the JASON project that is on line as well. "Being awarded this grant will definitely

boost Wyola into a whole new technology phase. Being so rural and isolated, this grant will give us the access we need to meet the needs of our students at a very high level," states Wanda Johnston, Principal Wyola Elementary. This grant is just one of the grants that Wyola has had the privilege of being awarded. In the last year and a half, Wyola has received grants for over \$425,000. "We have a staff that is second to none. We have worked extremely hard to bring Wyola to this level. Wyola boasts a sign as you walk in the door, 'Becoming the Best Little School in the State of Montana', and we mean it." smiles Johnston!

On September 24th and 25th fifteen Lame Deer high school GEAR UP students and several alternative school students participated in the yearly Spay and Neuter Clinic for animals held on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. Over 200 dogs and cats were treated during the two day clinic. Veterinarians from other areas in Montana generously provide free medical care to animals residing on the reservation during the two day event. It has become so popular that animals had to be turned away this year due to time limitations. This year students volunteered to assist the vets in all areas. While some signed in animals and numbered them, others watched operating procedures, provided clean towels and blankets, kept areas clean and tended to animals in recovery. Students were active in all areas of the clinic. Many of the

GEAR UP Spotlight: LAME DEER

high school students are interested in health careers and participated in the GEAR UP after-school nursing program and summer nursing camps held at MSU-Billings. Not only did the students receive volunteer hours, but the time spent was equal to 14 hours of job shadowing. Clinic staff members were grateful to the students for all of their hard work, and they are invited to participate in next year's clinic!

GEAR UP Creed



- I am **GEARed UP** for **college**.
- Do not expect less from me.
- Do not accept less from me.
- Do not *water down* my **curriculum**.
- Do not hide the **facts**.
- Do not ~~distort~~ the **truth**.
- Do not *pacify* or **patronize** me.
- Do not try to *DERAIL* me, *DETAIN* me, or *DISCOURAGE* me.

- I am **GEARed UP** for **college**.
- I have a **plan** and a *destination*.
- I have **support** and a **strategy** for *Success*
- I have **decided** at an early age to live **beyond the usual expectations** and to not merely **survive** under *low expectations*.

- I am **GEARed UP** for college.
- I am **NOT AFRAID** of the hard stuff and I am a **RISK TAKER!**
- I am **GEARed UP** for **college**.
- I will attend **college**, enjoy **college**, and I will graduate from **college!**

- I am GEARed *UP* for **college!**
- I am GEARed *up* for my career!
- I am **GEARed UP** for my *Life!*

GEAR UP/Project SHIFT @ The University of Missouri-Kansas City
"Soaring Heights and Identifying Future Talents"
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Montana GEAR UP website
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Montana Guaranteed Student Loan website:
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National GEAR UP website:
<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/gearup/index.html>